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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION US NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY
REPORT IRAN IRAQ IRAN-LATIN AMERICAN TIES DEATH OF
MILOSEVIC AND THE ICC ARGENTINE DECORATION FOR FORMER
HUMAN RIGHTS A/S PATRICIA DERIAN 03/17/06

¶1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Today's most important international stories include the US Operation Swarmer, its largest air assault against Baghdad; the US National Security Strategy Report, in which US President George W. Bush reaffirmed his strike-first policy against terrorists and enemy nations and termed Venezuelan President Chavez as "a demagogue and destabilizing influence;" the US foreign policy on Iraq on the third anniversary of the invasion of the country; Iran's alleged interest in Latin American countries to find a way out of a possible UN embargo; the Argentine Government's decoration for former Human Rights Assistant Secretary Patricia Derian for her work in Argentina during the Carter administration; and the International Criminal Court's unfinished trial of former Serbian dictator Milosevic.

¶2. OPINION PIECES AND KEY STORIES

- "Bush told the US Congress that he plans an attack against Iran"

Leading "Clarín" reports (03/17) "Yesterday, US President George W. Bush acknowledged in his National Security Strategy report (which was submitted to the US Congress) that his government is analyzing the possibility of a military attack against Iran. The White House leader's message is an updated version of his 2002 'pre-emptive attack' policy, whereby Washington believes it has the right to strike first against enemy countries. The first country on the list (of enemy countries) after the invasion of Iraq is the ayatollahs' regime.

"In its 42-page report, the White House also mentions Cuba and Venezuela."

- "Tehran now observes Latin America with interest"

Gustavo Sierra, on special assignment in Tehran for leading "Clarín," comments (03/17) "Iran is looking to Latin America in finding a way out in the event the UN imposes an embargo on it as a consequence of its confrontation with the US over its independent nuclear development plan. Iran is particularly interested in getting closer to its main interlocutor in the region, the Venezuela of Hugo Chavez.

"But it is not only Caracas. There are the other leftist governments, which are confronted with the US while in tune with the Iranian theocracy. When the International Atomic Energy Agency 35 members voted in Vienna on the transfer of the Iranian case to the UN Security Council, Iran only had three votes in its favor - that of Syria, a predictable ally in the region, Venezuela and Cuba.

"Iran also approached Bolivia since Evo Morales took over, who proposed a trilateral strategic alliance with Venezuela. Brazil has 'normal' relations with Iran.

"Argentina's ties with Iran have been frozen for 12 years since the attack against the AMIA headquarters."

- "Bush confirms pre-emptive wars"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," comments (03/17) "Four years and a half after the September 11 attacks, US President George W. Bush confirmed in his National Security Strategy Report his questioned pre-emptive policy, which is aimed at protecting US security, and he said Iran may pose the 'biggest challenge' for the US these days.

"... Bush also reasserted that the US plays a leading role in 'setting a model for the world' and preventing (by hitting first) terrorist groups or countries having WMD from attacking the US.

"However, and in contrast to a previous version of the document, this time the White House underscored its

'strong preference' of multilateral international diplomacy to face these threats, although with a blunt limit - 'If necessary, under the longstanding principles of self defense, we do not rule out the use of force before attacks against the US occur, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack.'

- "When retreat is not an option"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," highlights (03/17) "Questioned by the leaders of other powers and with the GOP close to rebellion, with increasing financial restrictions, with Iraq flirting with civil war and without sound resources to launch a war on Iran, US President George W. Bush reaffirmed yesterday a policy that will pass into history with his name - the US strike-first policy.

"... Neo-conservatives sustain that the US has unparalleled political, war and economic power and that it should use this power in pursuing its moral objectives, such as the promotion of democracy and the control of foreign threats.

"Secondly, neo-conservatives are deeply skeptical about the efficacy of multilateral institutions (first and foremost, the UN) and international law in dealing with 'tyrants' like Saddam Hussein, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad or North-Korean Kim Jong Il, or the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis."

- "Disheartened"

Alejandra Pataro, international columnist of leading "Clarn," writes (03/17) "Almost three years have passed since the invasion of Iraq, and today war is nothing but a 'stone lifejacket' for the Bush

administration during an election year.

"The US president barely has 36% of support. The occupation stopped being an element to seduce the US electorate, which in 2003 unconditionally applauded the military adventure. Today, with 2,300 soldiers killed, the story has changed.

"Bush travels around the US repeating a discourse related to his victorious strategy in Iraq in order to reverse his unpopular ratings. Words are not enough for him. Yesterday's cinematographic military offensive with helicopters (along the lines of 'Apocalypse Now') perhaps is aimed at cheering the US people up."

- "US terms Chavez a 'demagogue' and a 'destabilizing influence'"

Business-financial "Ambito Financiero" (03/17) "According to a White House report (National Security Strategy report), Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez is 'a demagogue' that uses oil money to undermine democracy in Latin America. The report also denounced populism in the region, accused Cuban dictator Fidel Castro of 'subverting regional freedom,' and pointed to Iran as the US's major current challenge.

"... The document also warned on the danger posed by the increasing populism in the region and called to act in order to prevent its progress.

"... While the document hails the FTAs negotiated with several countries of the region..., most of its text is devoted to Iraq and Afghanistan and to defending the 'pre-emptive' attacks policy against those countries threatening the US. In this regard, it considers Iran its most important challenge."

- "Former US Assistant Secretary for Human Rights receives a decoration"

Maria Luisa Mac Kay, columnist of leading "Clarín," writes (03/17) "On March 24, the Argentine Government will decorate Patricia Derian, former US Assistant Secretary for Human Rights during the Carter

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administration.

"... During the three visits Derian made to Argentina in 1977, she met with Videla, Massera, Harguindeguy and received more than 5,000 denunciations.

"... The decoration will be presented to Derian by Argentine Consul to New York Hector Timerman, who organized a ceremony in the framework of a long list of ceremonies that the Argentine Government is organizing all over the world."

13. EDITORIALS

- "Former dictator Milosevic's death"

Leading "Clarín" editorializes (03/17) "Slobodan Milosevic, former Serbian dictator, died in prison just a few months away from the end of his trial at the International Criminal Court.

"... 66 charges of genocide and crime against humanity were filed against him. Milosevic started to be judged in 2002... The international community established a court to judge the crimes committed in former Yugoslavia... whose work was expected to end next year. Milosevic's death has not cured the old wounds,

which are still painfully open in the Balkans."

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GUTIERREZ